A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

KING,

AT

His Majesty's Chappel

IN

WINDSOR-CASTLE,

NOVEMB. 10. 1695.

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ACTS XVI. part of the 30, 31 Verſes.

——Sirs, What ſhall I do to be ſaved? And they ſaid, Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved, and thy houſe.

THE Converſion of the Jaylor here, is an effect of the precedent Miracle, *v.* 26. which was wrought by the Power of God, not only to reclaim the Pagan World from Idolatry and Superſtition, but to vindicate the Perſons alſo of *Paul* and *Silas*; who through ſome covetous Maſters, who were angry that their Servant a Damſel, who brought ſo much gain unto them by Sooth-ſaying, by theſe Apoſtles was now diſpoſſeſt of her divining Spirit. So much did Covetouſneſs outweigh their Charity and Religion, *v.* 19. and by the giddy Multitude, who under pretence of aged Cuſtoms and Superſtition is ſoon fired into Cruelties, Riots, and Diſorder, *v.* 21, 22. And through the Magiſtrates here, who were perhaps forc'd to comply, from the Clamour and Noiſe of the Herd, which many times grows the lowder from commanding Silence; theſe two

innocent Perſons are condemned to the Rods and Priſon; and the buſy Jaylor, to pleaſe his Maſters and the Rabble, beſtows upon them the darkeſt Room in his Jayl, *v.* 24. where theſe two Saints did not warm their Heads to contrive Revenge, nor whine at, and bewail the Severity of the Judge, or the madneſs of the People, nor ſink into deſpair for fear of further Puniſhment, Axes, or Rods, that might attend them; but flaming with Devotion, like Souls upon the Wing, Spiritual and Divine, truly Citizens of another World, merrily and loudly ſend up their Prayers, and tune their Praiſes unto God, who ſoon heard, and by a miraculous Change in Nature, the ſhaking of the Earth, the moving of the Foundation of the Priſon, the Bands and Shackles of the Captives flying off, own'd the Faith and Creed that *Paul* and *Silas* taught, evidenc'd the vigour of a fervent Prayer, righted the Innocency of their Perſons, and baptiz'd the Jaylor into the Religion of his Priſoners. For ſeeing theſe mighty Wonders, his Soul, that hitherto was kept in ſtraiter Bonds, and a darker Dungeon than ever St. *Paul* lay in, look'd now like the Priſon that he kept, from a clear Conviction upon his Mind, that he was a groſs Sinner, and that *Paul* and *Silas*'s Religion brought Salvation with it, and was very true; full of fears and agonies of Mind, aſtoniſh-

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ment and confusion of Spirit, comes trembling and falls down to them that he had whipt before, begging their charitable Advice in this great concern, *Sirs*, &c.

In which words these two Parts are to be considered,

I. The Question of great importance that is ask'd here, *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*

II. A plain and sufficient Answer given to it; *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*

The State of the Jaylor here is the condition of all Mankind, who from the natural Light that shines within, and divine Discovery from above, sent into the World, clear up an immortal State with infinite Sorrows, or eternal Joys to attend their different Actions, which puts the Souls of Men upon the Search, and Passion, Fears and Hopes, Jealousies and Desires, to fly from the Flames which burn under their Feet, and to attain the Crown of Glory which hangs o're their Head. There is no Man of so sear'd or cauteriz'd a Conscience; there is no Man of so bold and daring a Spirit, but some time or other shivers and waxes Pale to think that either he must take an eternal Sleep in the Grave, and never be again, or else be lash'd and scourg'd for his Follies if he doth survive. No Man's Blood is so warm and feverish,

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with the pleasures and joys of this Life, but hath its cool intermission when Conscience and Reason debate the Case and ask him, What will be the issue of all these things? What will be the result and conclusion of all my Lusts and Vices? Live I cannot, Dye I dare not; Where shall I fly? What Spirits shall I be company for? As the Apparation said to *Saul*, I e're long must be with them. Such is my dismal Streight and Condition, *What must I do to be saved?* No Man's Methods and Arts are so sly and cunning, to extinguish the notion of a God, to pull down Heaven and put out the Fires below, to smother the cries of Conscience, and draw the Curtain upon the light of Reason; but some time or other, either when Afflictions or Troubles arrest him, and stop him in the full career of his vicious Pleasures, or when Sickness, Disappointments, or a Dying Bed seize his Passions, then he cries out, like the Sorcerer, *Oh! let me dye the death of the righteous*; and whatever my life was in the beginning, *let my latter end be like his.* Call a Confessor and a Guide, for I am a going I know not whither, and Hell and Despair begin to appear; And what shall I do? This is the Language of all Mankind, of the Timorous and Inquisitive, the Young and Aged, the Melancholy and the Gay, the Sensual and Vicious, the Pagan and Christian, the Question

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in every Man's Breaſt. God hath been ſo kind, by the Goſpel, to give us a plain and ſufficient Anſwer to this important Queſtion, telling us what we were, what we are, and what we muſt be; pointing out our Joys, diſcovering our Dangers, deſcribing our Countrey, and the Inhabitants above, giving us wiſe Counſel and wholeſom Directions, how we muſt walk and arrive there. In ſhort, only thus; to believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. And which Words may be diſcours'd on by this Method.

1. To conſider who the Perſons are, who can properly ask this Queſtion.

2. What is the Nature of this Belief, or Faith that will ſave us?

3. To evidence that, this Anſwer is plain and ſufficient.

4. Some Concluſions from the whole.

1. 'Tis the Queſtion of a Pagan to a Chriſtian; and 'tis the Caſe of the Jaylor here, who ſadly complains that his Notions and Evidences for Immortality were very uncertain and obſcure; and that the moſt Learned among them, and the beſt of their Guides did confeſs this. *Seneca* therefore acknowledgeth upon what Grounds his Hopes of another Life was founded. *I did believe*, ſaith he, *the Opinions of our great Men about the bleſſed State for departed Souls, not for the ſake of their Arguments, but*

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the Perſwaſion was Pleaſant, and I could wiſh that it was True. And *Socrates* coming to dye, after he had made his fine Oration about the Soul and Virtue, and the Bleſſed Manſions above, ſaid, *Upon this account I could dye Ten thouſand Deaths*; but concludes, *whether this be ſo or no, only the Gods above do know.* And the Reaſonings of their great *Antoninus*, as famous for his Philoſophy as for his Empire, and ſeveral others about the Nature of the Soul, and the Juſtice of Providence, whatever ſtrength they have in them (as a great deal they have) yet are above the ordinary level of Mankind, and the Rules and Maxims of their Philoſophers for a Virtuous Life, as the way to Heaven were many times above, ſometimes below, and ſome parts of their Religion unworthy of their Practice; that they were diſtracted and confounded among themſelves about the beſt end of Life, and the chiefeſt Good; that they drew but imperfect Notions, and Features of the firſt Mover, or Supreme Deity; and therefore ſerv'd him by the rude Addreſſes of the *Dii Medioxumi*, their intermediate Gods and Saints, derogatory to his Honour and Greatneſs. And the vulgar World was ſo enſlav'd in their Luſts and Apprehenſions, that they not only ador'd the Sun or Stars, a Lyon or an Oak, things that were Great, Generous and Uſeful; but like the Sottiſh *Egyptians*, below their Nature, Crocodiles and Monkies,

Monkies, Leeks and Onions, of which they might have a new Crop of young Gods and Goddeſſes every Year. And beſides all this, the Pagan had an active Reaſon, and a buſy Conſcience within, and a lively impreſſion of God enſtamp'd upon his Soul, which he had much abus'd, though he could no more utterly deface, than put out the Sun, and that he ſhould ſurvive this Life, and be laſh'd and ſcourg'd, crown'd or rewarded in the other World: And therefore he cries, Allay my Fears, and ſupport my Hopes, and tell me *What muſt I do to be ſaved?* The Chriſtian can preſcribe him that Phyſick which cur'd his own Diſeaſe, and is approv'd by the Teſtimony of numerous Converts, *Believe in the Lord Jeſus*, &c. But that he may not wink and ſwallow this down, and cure himſelf only by a warm Fancy, thinking he is well, and have no reaſon for the Preſcription; the Jaylor here had the mighty Argument of Miracles for his Converſion, and all Mankind juſtly challenge ſome reaſon for their Perſuaſion. And therefore the Chriſtian Guide tells the Pagan, That the Chriſtian Religion or way of Salvation, hath the cleareſt Evidence on its ſide, being confirm'd by greater and more Miracles than any other Perſwaſion. That its Doctrines are ſuitable to the reaſon and dictates of humane Nature, highly ſerviceable to the true Intereſts of Men here in all

Capacities and Relations, and an endleſs Life hereafter. That its Authour Jeſus had a ſtupendious Birth; his Perſon, Offices and Actions, Prophecy'd of long before, and exactly fulfill'd in all their due Circumſtances. A Perſon he was of an unſullied Life, and without any deſign of ſecular Intereſt or Popularity, hugely Generous and Charitable to all ſorts and degrees of Men, who ſign'd his Diſcoveries and Truths with the ſmarteſt Agonies and Effuſion of his Blood, and Crown'd and Confirm'd all his Laws by a greater Wonder, his Reſurrection from the Grave: Who continu'd the Arguments for our Faith in the Miſſion of his Spirit, by the miraculous Gift of Tongues upon his Apoſtles; Men of the greateſt Sincerity and Integrity, who with the ſucceeding Ages, without any ſiniſter Deſign, convey'd in an undoubted way the Hiſtory of this Religion to this preſent Age, a way equivalent to the hearing of our Ears, and ſeeing of our Eyes; a faithful Tradition ſupplying our Senſes. Theſe and many more are the Arguments of our Chriſtian Faith, and fit to prevail upon an honeſt and unprejudic'd Mind. What ſhall the Pagan, the Atheiſt, or the doubting Chriſtian (who is always for laying the Foundation again, but never building up the Superſtructure of an holy Life, by reaſon of ſome particular Vices that he is loth to part withal) do to be ſaved?

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Let them weigh and conſider, try and examine; for the Chriſtian Religion, by ſuch Reaſons as theſe hath prevail'd upon the Great and Learned, upon all Tempers and Profeſſions of Men; and if they will let their Paſſions and Prepoſſeſſions ſubmit to their Judgment, they will find Arguments ſufficient to believe in the Lord Jeſus, and to be baptiz'd into the Chriſtian Faith.

2. 'Tis the Queſtion of a Chriſtian, troubled with the Diviſions of Chriſtendom, not knowing to what Church to adhere. The honeſt Chriſtian ſadly finding Religion torn into ſo many Parts and Pieces, and every Diviſion and Sect of Chriſtians confining Chriſt, with all his Privileges and Promiſes, to their private Sect; ſmall Fraternities, and Cloyſters, ſingle Families, and particular Perſons, have beſtow'd upon themſelves the great Names of the only Church and Houſhold of Faith; and Sentenc'd all the World for Reprobates, not within their narrow Bounds and Pale; and have chain'd, as the *Tyrians* did their gods, to their City, Providence and Religion, Heaven and Eternity, only to their own ſide, and every one with a *Damnamus* fix'd unto their Creeds: The Seed of *Iſaac*, in this, too much like that of *Iſhmael*, he againſt every Man, and every Man againſt him, diſcharging Cenſures and Excommunications one againſt another. The plain Chriſtian that thinks a Soul and

God, infinite Rewards or Miſeries, are too great to be plaid withal, and frighted with the confident pretences of ſome, and acted upon by the ſly Methods of others, begins to be wavering in his Faith, uncertain in his Hopes and Profeſſion, and like a bewildred Pilgrim ſtanding where variety of Ways do meet, ſurrounded with Woods and Waters, and hearing different Voices, crying, *Come hither, and here is Chriſt; go thither, and there is Jeſus*; and pointing yonder, *Lo, there lys the way that leads to Sion*; He begins to tremble, and begs of ſome charitable Guide to lead him by the Hand to the Houſe where Chriſt dwells; asks him the way how we may walk ſecurely. *What muſt be do to be ſaved?* He is the ſafeſt and moſt faithful Guide that tells him this, *Believe in the Lord Jeſus; he is the way, the truth, and the life.* For this is the Summary of the Goſpel, the Epitome of all true Religion, wherein all Chriſtians do agree, and a general proſpect of that new and living way alone whereby we muſt be ſav'd, manifeſt to Men in the Schools, and at the Plow, the Learned and Illiterate, Faith to whatever God hath revealed in Holy Writ, and a Life conformable to his Laws. Which Compendium of our Faith, when Men of Wit and Intereſt drew out into longer and ſmaller Threds, and multiply'd Fundamentals, defining obſcure Notions for Divine Light and Evi-

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dent Truth, by an Authority more dark than they; they ſour'd Religion, made it a fardle of Perplexities, and an indigeſted heap of Speculations. The Apoſtle forſeeing this, reminds his Son *Timothy* to keep cloſe *to the form of ſound words*, which was this belief on Jeſus, and the Doctrine which is according to Godlineſs. Which when Men of Fancy and nice Conception, mixt with Secular Deſigns ſlighted and contemn'd, they ruin'd that Faith that was once deliver'd unto the Saints. And when the great Commiſſion was ſign'd unto the Apoſtles to go and preach to, and baptize all Nations, they receiv'd an Abridgment of that Religion which they were to teach, which was only this, *That Jeſus was the Chriſt*; and this became the Character of a true Chriſtian; and 'twas the brand of the Man of Sin, whoſoever and whereſoever he is, that either directly, or by natural Conſequence he ſhould deny, *That Jeſus was come in the fleſh*; that the Son of God had taken upon him Humane Nature. And 'twas the Wiſdom of the firſt Planters of Religion, to prevent the Cavils of the *Gnoſticks*, and other peeviſh Diſputants, whoſe Heats are moſt kindled by Straw and Stubble laid upon the Foundation. Variety of Phraſes, and changing of Syllables to reduce all the Fundamentals of Religion, and comprize them under ſhorter Forms, call'd our Creeds; which when after Ages drew into thin and inviſible

2 Tim. 1. 13.

1 John 4. 2, 3.

1 Cor. 3. 11, 12.

ble Surfaces, our Faith turn'd into Faction and ſophiſtical Niceties, the eaſineſs of Religion, its true Honour, was confounded, the Commandments of Men, the Inſtitutes of the Schools, *Ariſtotle* Canoniz'd, the Prejudices and Craft of the Age brought into the Temple, and call'd the Holy of holies. Chriſtian, What ſhall you do to be ſaved? You are ſafe and ſecure in this Church, that preſerves this Faith intire as its Author did deliver it, neither wreſting its Articles from their natural Senſe, nor adding any, pretending a Divine Commiſſion, nor diminiſhing the number of them, whoſe Doctrine is Apoſtolical, Diſcipline primitive, and Ceremonies few and decent, all leading to an holy Life, the ſolemn end of all Religion. As for thoſe Controverſies that are not of this Foundation, which warm the Heads of the Learned and Studious, and ſtir up the Blood of the Angry and Peeviſh, if the unhappineſs of your Education, the privacy of your Living, or greatneſs of your Employment, will not permit you to ſtate and determine their Truth, the Spirit of God will either lead you into it, or elſe your induſtry, probity, and ſincerity of Mind will excuſe your Ignorance, which in ſuch matters will never hazard your Salvation.

3. 'Tis the Queſtion of a Vicious Chriſtian to his Spiritual Guide, who having been baptized into

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to this moſt Holy Faith, made his ſolemn Vows for a Virtuous Life, and by entertaining the hopes of a bleſſed Eternity, liſted himſelf under the Banner of Chriſtianity, yet notwithſtanding all this he hath fouly apoſtatized and run from his Colours, betraying his Faith and his Conſcience, his Reſolution and his Reaſon into Lewdneſs and groſſer Follies, and proſtituting all Holy Things, crucified the Lord of Life again; whereby he has degraded his Nature, wounded Religion, ſtain'd his Family, damnified his Prince and Countrey, ſcandaliz'd all that are good and wiſe, and abus'd his God; and now being an Aged and Gray-headed Sinner, labouring under Infirmities of Body, the Puniſhment of his Greener Days, and a diſtemper'd Conſcience within, and now taking a view of all his Pleaſures and Follies that are paſt, giving this ſad account, That he began them in Fancy, carried them on in Labour, and now end in Diſſatisfaction and Diſdain, and this ſorrowful Queſtion here, after a Life ſo ill ſpent, *What ſhall he do to be ſav'd?* Sinner, What ſhall you do to be ſav'd? Renew your Vows, repeat your Reſolution, abhor and deteſt your Follies that are paſt, and take the Prophet's Advice to the Tyrant, *Break off your ſins by righteouſneſs, and your iniquities by ſhewing mercy to the poor*, and it may be a lengthning of your Tranquility, your Poſſeſſions will be enjoy'd with a more

more eaſy mind, and your lawful Pleaſures will taſte the ſweeter; for this is believing on the Lord Jeſus; Faith being a complexive term, ſignifying not only our Aſſent, but our Obedience too, our Creed and Practice. So to Believe, as to Repent; ſo to Repent, as to *bring forth fruits meet for repentance*: So to Believe, as to change your ill habits, to reform your Manners, to reſtrain your Paſſions and vain Deſires, and put a final concluſion to all your Luſts and Follies; and *the time paſt of your life may ſuffice you to have wrought the will of the Gentiles.* If you have been guilty of Violence and Oppreſſion, Reſtitution muſt be made, a large and Heroick Charity muſt be exercis'd, and Satisfaction made in all Capacities. You muſt run counter to, and unraffle all the Ill Cuſtoms you have contracted, recant and unſay wherein you have deceiv'd, by a Virtuous Example, Diſcourſe, and Behaviour; allure unto Piety, where by your Vicious Actions, you have ſeduc'd; in time to come uſe mortification and ſelf-denial; Go, *and ſin no more, leſt a worſe thing happen unto you*; and now be more Brave and Generous, and like St. *Paul*, becauſe *once a blaſphemer, a perſecutor, and injurious*; upon his Converſion he *laboured more abundantly, and his faith wrought and was perfected by love.* The Sinner ſo believing, and ſo acting, let his former Crimes be of never ſo deep a dye, never ſo many, of a long continuance, and

and cloath'd with all their aggravating Circumſtances, is heavy laden, yet hath his Pardon ſeal'd in Heaven. Remiſſion of Sins by Chriſt being as certainly true, as Jeſus is the Chriſt. This is the Plank after Shipwrack of Faith and a good Conſcience, by which we may ſwim to Shore. This is the way to redeem time that is miſpent and fled away; to call Life back and act it o're again. The Sinner thus ſincere and reſolv'd, is accepted into Favour, treated like a righteous Perſon, his Debts cancell'd, no former Miſcarriages to upbraid him, but look'd upon as a Saint and a Friend of God, his Queſtion Anſwer'd, and he eternally ſav'd through Chriſt on whom he did believe.

4. 'Tis the Queſtion of an honeſt Chriſtian, troubled in Mind, whoſe wounded and timerous Spirit viewing a large Catalogue of black and crying Sins, though now repented of, fancies them beyond the Divine Mercy and Reprieve. Sometimes an Hypocondriacal Paſſion, the effect of his Conſtitution, over-clouds his Soul, which he calls the Anger of God, the withdrawing of his Spirit, and the doom of Heaven: To day he is diſappointed, and ſome Calamity of Life, Fire or Mildew blaſts his Hopes; he meaſuring his Aſſurance in God, by Succeſs and Sunſhine, thinks Heaven is gone, and Eternity will Miſcarry. His penſive Thoughts grime every Frailty for an habitual Sin,

and ſwells every Error into the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, unpardonable, and dye he muſt. Sometimes his Thoughts are confus'd about another World, and hath diſmal Apprehenſions about eternal Decrees; and ſome ſevere Men have denounc'd Damnation againſt him, becauſe he is not of their Party and Diviſion, and becauſe of ſome unintelligible Characters which Enthuſiaſts have ſet for Men to judge by, whether they ſhall be ſav'd or no, and overaw'd by the greatneſs of Eternity and God; and the ſly Deceiver who firſt tempts Men to preſumption, and then to deſpair, improving Scruples into Deſpondency. *David*'s roaring for the Diſquietneſs of his Mind, and the Jaylor's Queſtion here, *Miſerable man that I am, What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* The only Balm for this wounded Spirit, is ſuch a Faith as this; it being the Condition of the New Covenant and our Salvation, and the ſum of all our Duties and Labour. All thoſe other Conceits being Errors and Miſapprehenſions of the Divine Goodneſs, and Methods of the Goſpel. For it's plain to all, that whoever believes, ſhall be ſav'd; and that Man certainly believes, who refrains from his vicious Inclinations, becauſe Chriſt commands, and can eaſily judge whether he doth ſo or no; and if he ſhoul'd miſtake in judging too ſeverely of his Condition, ſo long as he hath done his Duty, his Miſtake may be his Vexation here, but never his Damnation

Damnation hereafter. For 'tis harſh to conceive of the Divine Clemency, that if the Chriſtian hath diſcharg'd all his Duties, and is perfect by an Evangelical Allowance, that yet he ſhould be Damn'd, becauſe his fear of God may border a little upon Superſtition, and Scruples and Objections may gnaw upon him, not his Pleaſure but his greateſt Pain. Had your Servant faithfully diſcharg'd all your Commands, and paid his Reverence, yet was fearful leſt he had omitted any thing, or done amiſs, and therefore began to deſpair of your Favour and Reward; Would it not look very cruel to deny him the Reputation of, *Well done good and faithful ſervant, enter into your maſters joy? Shall not the Judge of heaven and earth do right?* Who will try Men at the laſt Bar, not for their invincible Errors, Miſpriſions, mortal Fears and Suſpicions, which are far better than Confidence and Preſumption, but by Principles and Practice, wilful Ignorance and habitual Vices; theſe and theſe alone will Sentence them into eternal Deſpair. Our merciful High-prieſt knows and pities our Mold and Frame, and the ſad Circumſtances of humane Life, and the Covenant of Grace and its Meſſias are Prophecy'd of, *Not to quench the ſmoaking flax, nor break the bruiſed reed.* The Juſtice of our Judge, and the Goodneſs of our Advocate will not ſuffer us to loſe our Poſſeſſion of Heaven, though we underſtand not the nature of the Title, and Iſa. 42. 3.

procedures of the Court, when by Faith and Repentance 'tis made out, and in it ſelf, and to thoſe knowing and righteous Perſons it appears very true. Divine Providence many times permitting theſe Doubts and Scruples in the beſt of men, to make them the more to ſtand upon their guard, to quicken their motions, to inflame their Prayers and Zeal, and other excellent Purpoſes. And tho they may, like *Lazarus* with his Rags and Sores, die in ſome Errors and Infirmities of Life, and in Clouds and uncertainties paſs by the Gates of Hell, yet they ſhall not ſtay there, but certainly arrive at Heaven.

2. What ſort of Faith this is, that will ſave us. 'Tis ſuch a Faith as is productive of good Works, Mercy, and Charity, change of Manners, newneſs of Life, mixt with Modeſty and Humilty, without pretending Merit, or challenging of Heaven. We cannot obey except we believe, and we do not believe except we obey. Faith and Obedience in Scripture-Language being put one for the other, both made neceſſary to Salvation, without an idle diſpute about the preference. Faith is the Radix and Foundation of all Chriſtian Virtues, and when theſe are built upon it, it receives its Complement and Perfection, without which Faith turns into Romance and Story, and will no more avail us to gain Heaven, than a Winter Nights Tale. Such a belief as reſts only in Speculation, would contradict

tradict the great End of Chriſt's coming into the World; which was to pull down the ſtrong holds of Sin, and overturn the Dominions of the Devil; this is the way to make them ſtronger ſtill, and enlarge his Power, if ſuch a Faith is ſound and ſaving, only to believe that Chriſt hath done ſo much for us, there is nothing left for us to do, but only ſtrongly to believe it, and admire it, and ſo paſs in a full Gale of our own Fancy into another World. True Faith operates upon the Believer's mind, to abate his Conceit and Pride, his Paſſions, and his Luſts, to make a ſurrender of himſelf to the Government of Jeſus, to be guided and directed by him, to take his Revelations or Pleaſure in their whole Compaſs and Latitude, his Precepts and Promiſes, his Commands and Predictions, and ſet an equal value upon all, except we think that Chriſt is in earneſt only with ſome parts of his Goſpel, and others are only for Scene and Show. A natural Religion in ſome degree obliges Men to Virtue and Goodneſs, and Chriſt's reveal'd Religion heightned thoſe Virtues to an higher pitch by reaſon of greater Rewards, and the clearer diſcovery of them; and never intended to put bare belief into their place, which was the way to make us leſs Men by being Chriſtians, and turn the Royal Law and Liberty into Licentiouſneſs. We are to believe under the pain of Eternal Damnation,

nation, the Divinity of the Son of God, Jesus with all his Offices and Undertaking for Mankind; but as such Truths are very apt and fit to correct our Nature, and keep us to our Duties; so if they do not attain that end, as well to make us live righteously, as to think aright; to purify our hearts, as to clear our heads, our Faith will turn into dream, our Grace will prove phantastick, and our Hopes of Heaven are ill-bottom'd; *And tho our faith be as strong as to remove mountains, yet it will be counted only the tinkling cymbal*, to make a noise and disturb the World; and when we knock at Heaven Gates with a great deal of passion, crying, *Lord, Lord, open unto us*; the Answer will be, *Be gone, I know you not.*

3. To evidence, that this is a plain and sufficient Answer to this important Question, *What shall I do to be saved?*

This will appear very true and clear, if we consider what the Gospel saith, our only Judge and Oracle in this matter. If we search the Divine Records, we shall easily find, that such a Faith as this is laid down as the only necessary Condition of our Salvation. And 'tis indifferently expresst, That if we expect to be sav'd, sometimes we must believe, sometimes we must obey, both for the same design and purpose, to tell all men their duty. When Christ was therefore ask'd, What was the Condition of Eternal Life, his Answer was to some, That they must

muſt believe on him the Promiſed Meſſias; to others, That they muſt keep the Commands; both of them inſeparable Duties. And when Chriſt ask'd his Diſciples, *Whom ſay ye that I am?* St. *Peter* anſwer'd, *Thou art the Chriſt, the Son of the Living God.* Chriſt replies, and tells them, *Upon this rock*, upon this Confeſſion, *I will build my church, and the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt it*: This Faith ſhall ſomewhere or other laſt, and be the Condition of mens Salvation to the end of the world. This was the good Confeſſion that Chriſt himſelf witneſs'd before *Pontius Pilate*: This was *Mary's* Creed: And this was that the doubting Diſciple made upon his Conviction, *My Lord, and my God*: And all this naturally producing Charity and Meekneſs, and ſuch excellent Virtues. And the beloved Diſciple tells us, this was the Character of one that is born of God, *That he ſhould believe that Jeſus was come in the fleſh.* And the great Apoſtle makes this the Sum of all Religion, *Charity out of a pure heart, a good conſcience, and faith unfeign'd.* And when the reſt of the Apoſtles and Apoſtolical men laid down the ſeveral Notes for men to judge by, whether they ſhould be ſav'd or no, as Grace and Spirit, Decrees and Church, and the like, they all center here, tho expreſs'd by different Names, Faith, Sanctification, Regeneration, purifying and cleanſing; and all Prayers and Sacraments, Temples and Altars,

Matt. 16. 16, 17, 18.

1 Tim. 6. 13.

Joh. 20. 20, 28.

1 Tim. 1. 5.

Diſci-

Diſcipline and Ceremonies, aim at this, to guard this ſhort Creed, and an honeſt Converſation. That no Age nor Sex, Intereſt nor Party of men might call themſelves the People of God, except they wrought Righteouſneſs, chang'd their Manners, and by Evangelical allowance became perfect and holy, as their ſuppoſed Heavenly Father was. And ſuch a Religion as this, and this alone, *is pure and undefiled.*

The Concluſions that follow from this whole Diſcourſe are theſe Two.

1. That if ſuch a Faith as this will ſave us, we are ſafe and ſecure in this Church of *England*, notwithſtanding the Damnation that ſome men denounce againſt us, and the Anger of others that ſeparate from us: For this is the Creed of our Church, this we firmly and ſincerely believe. And if theſe early Chriſtians could be undoubtedly ſav'd by the Confeſſion of ſuch a Faith, why not we, who believe this in the ſame ſenſe that Chriſt and his Apoſtles delivered it, and in a more diffuſed and explained manner, as the Chriſtians about the firſt 300 years taught us in their Three moſt famous and celebrated Creeds; and alſo what is neceſſarily preſuppoſed or implied in this ſhort Creed, or by natural Conſequences deduc'd from it. But thoſe things that have no dependance upon, or relation to this Creed, or endeavoured to be derived from it,

it only by dark or remote Implications, and rather ſeem deſtructive of it, we cannot Chriſten Articles of Faith, or Fundamentals in Religion. How comes it to paſs that thoſe Firſt Chriſtians could be ſav'd by this Faith, and not we upon whom the ends of the World are come? Are there Articles of Faith neceſſary for one Age of the Chriſtian World, and not for another? Or was there any other Authority given to ſtamp new Articles for the urgent Neceſſities of the Church? Or how come theſe new Neceſſities? And why muſt the narrow way be made narrower ſtill? Thoſe that do diſſent from our Church, could never juſtly charge any Rules or Doctrines upon it, leading to Ill Manners, or Impiety; but that it teaches univerſal Juſtice and Charity towards all, and eſpecially all Humble Deportment and Duty to our Superiors. And we are ſure, upon the Word of an Apoſtle, That our Creed is full *and firm.* And if he that believes that Jeſus is *the Chriſt*, is born of God, we are ſure then that we are the Sons of God. And with Peace and Security to our Minds and Conſciences, we may ſay of our Church, which is nothing elſe but Old Chriſtianity, as the *Diſciples* did of its Author, the Bleſſed Jeſus, *Thou art He, and we look for no other.*

2. Let us conſider the Nature of the Faith that we rely upon for our Salvation. For many are ſo fond of and dear to their own Perſons, as to call

themſelves Saints, and Favourites of Heaven, who are violent in their falſe hopes, and by force ſtorm Heaven, with no other Title than the Mad man of *Athens* had to the Ships coming into that Port, his Fancy or his Frenzy. Give a reaſon therefore of your Hopes and Expectations. You, perhaps, believe, That Jeſus is *the Chriſt*; his Perſon Innocent, and his Doctrine Pure; but if this be all, if it reach not your Lives, 'tis but the Creed of the Spirits in deſpair, who, perhaps, do more than you, both believe and tremble too. Your Paſſions ſometimes are warm, and you magnify the Atchievements of your dying Lord, extol his Charity, court and admire his Promiſes, and the Purchaſe he hath made for you; but will this heat of Devotion alone ſerve the turn, then Hypocrites and other Vicious Perſons can be lovers at an equal rate, who cannot but admire Jeſus, who hath ſecur'd Heaven for them, and given them a diſpenſation for their Vices at the ſame time. You Pray and Communicate, you Vow and Reſolve, and once in a Year you give your Souls a little Phyſick in the Spring, and keep a *Lenten* Faſt; 'tis well run hitherto; but if your Devotion be out of breath, not to outſtrip and leave your Sins, 'tis Road and Cuſtom, Popular Fame, or Slaviſh Fear; but no true Principle or Ground of Hope. You Sin and Repent to give your Mind a little eaſe,

eaſe, but you go not forward, for you Sin and Repent again, and you are got into a Circle, and ſuch a round as this will make you giddy, that at length by Cuſtom you will ſcarce know which is Virtue, and which is Vice. And 'tis hard to conceive, that Men are fully perſwaded that the Flames burn under their Feet, and yet make from them only by ſuch dull Paces; or that Heaven and a Soul are of that moment, yet put them both upon *perhaps* and *peradventures*. In ſhort, no Man's Faith is true, no Man's Hope is well-grounded, no Man can truly call himſelf a Son of God, except he be baptized into, and live in the Jaylor's Faith. What is that? To make Confeſſion of his Faith and Sins together, the Commands and Creed to be equally reverenc'd to make him a true Chriſtian, a better and braver Man than the common Lump and Maſs of Mankind, and to reduce his extravagant Paſſions to the Regal Authority of Chriſt. Such a Faith this muſt be, that chuſeth Chriſt to be his King, as well as his Prieſt, to become his Sacrifice, or his Prophet, only to tell him Futurities. That when Intereſt and Pleaſure come in Competition and rival his Religion and Innocency, he can ſhake Hands with all thoſe, and ſtick faſt to his Conſcience and his God. Such a Faith this is, that believes the Incarnation of Chriſt to condemn Sin in the Fleſh.

Such

Such as believes his Circumcision in order to Mortification and Purity. Such as believes his Resurrection, not only to ascertain us of Glory, but to remind us also of newness of Life. Such which makes the solemn Design of the Gospel, all the Mysteries of the Blessed Jesus, with Prayers, Praises, and Sacraments, and the whole Frame of his Religion, not only to assure us of Imortality, and to carry our Burthens, but to be Arguments and Inducements also for our Obedience here, and Preparations for that Divine State we call Heaven hereafter. Such that are so minded in their Faith, there will be Peace and Salvation upon them, and the whole *Israel* of God, and their Hopes will be well founded, that when Christ the Author of their Life, and their Religion too, shall appear, they all may appear with him in Glory. *To whom be all Honour, Glory, and Praise, both now and for evermore.* Amen.

FINIS.